

Taula (UIB) núm. 15, 1992

Contents and contexts: on Fodor's narrow/broad divide

Manuel Liz

Universidad de La Laguna

Abstract

Folkpsychological knowledge is very ignorant of internal facts of the body. Folkpsychology is really very superficial and very behaviouristic. On the other hand, what happens inside our bodies must be very important and relevant for a scientific psychology. According to Fodor, only mental properties identified by means of causal powers that locally supervene on the body (narrow contents) are the business of a scientific psychology. In this paper, and through the notion of «canonical contexts of attribution», I explore a possible strategy for having also the local supervenience of some folk-contents (broad contents) and to develop causal theories about them.

Resumen

La atribución de actitudes proposicionales se realiza con un completo desconocimiento de cuáles puedan ser los hechos internos que ocurran en nuestros cuerpos. Pero son justamente estos hechos los que deben importar en una psicología científica. Según Fodor, la psicología debe individualizar propiedades mentales sólo en relación a propiedades causales que puedan sobrevenir localmente sobre los cuerpos de los sujetos. En este trabajo y a través de la noción de «contextos canónicos de atribución», se examina una posible estrategia para conseguir que las actitudes proposicionales atribuidas puedan también ser localmente sobrevenientes y tener cierto tipo de eficacia causal.

1. Two points of view: folkpsychology and knowledge of the body

Folkpsychology is the ordinary knowledge we can have of the mental life of whatever psychological subject. Now, what is a psychological subject? Perhaps the best answer would be that a psychological subject is whatever entity that could be known and which behaviour could be predicted and explained by means of folkpsychology. And such a characterization would not be circular or defective because psychological subjects can exist even though we may not have knowledge of their existence. The possibility not the actuality of folkpsychological knowledge is the key characteristic that permits the reality of a psychological subject. This is the reason why sometimes the real existence of a psychological subject —our real existence as psychological subjects for instance— appears to be only a business of counterfactual considerations. People —some animals and perhaps some artifacts too— think, desire, hope, hate and so on, and they act according to the things they think, desire, hope, hate and so on. Folkpsychology is the intuitive and mentalistic psychology of common sense. Its basic rules are well known for almost all people. For example, if someone believes that if A then B, and desires B, then —»*ceteris paribus*«— he/she will try to make A become true. Folkpsychology appeals to a mental life full of beliefs, desires and so forth. Folkpsychology is quite universal, it starts very early in our lives and, for the moment, it has no relevant rivals. Yet, in spite of such pervasiveness, folkpsychological knowledge is very ignorant of the body. We usually describe the mental life of people —roughly, that they think and desire and what they think and desire— with expressions that ignore any consideration to what is happening inside their bodies.

Let's refer to the context as all those facts from which we obtain and justify the folkpsychological descriptions of the mental life of a subject according to a content. In general, the *context of a thing X* will be made up of all the facts of the world —past, present future— but will actually exclude facts —past, present or future— inside X.

Usually we don't need go inside the skin of anyone to know a lot about his/her folkpsychology. People, you yourself, could be made of silicon and cheese, for instance, and people could have the oddest internal structures you can imagine, but from the point of view of folkpsychology nothing of this would matter. The things that matter are in the context. Here, the skin of the body, in a metaphorical sense that includes movements of the body and other such things, belongs to the context as one of its limits. The context starts, so to speak, with the skin and includes or can include all the rest of the world. From the folk perspective all we need —in order to obtain and justify folkpsychological descriptions of the mental life of a psychological subject— is a context. Folkpsychology is really very superficial and very behaviouristic.

On the other hand, from a scientific viewpoint what happens inside our body is very important and relevant and requires consideration if we want to explain and make scientifically clear our psychology. Biology and medical sciences stress the idea that all we are is unavoidably related to our bodies. From such a perspective, facts about the structure and composition of our bodies are crucial for scientifically knowing our psychology.

Let's refer to internal facts as all those facts that belong to our internal functional structure or to our internal stuff. In general, the *internal facts of a thing X* will be made up of all the facts —past, present or future— inside X.

The points of view of folkpsychology and of the knowledge of the body are opposite in at least four respects: 1) in respect to criteria of identification of mental properties, 2) in respect to ways in which mental properties can supervene on another non-mental properties, 3) in respect to how mental causation can be possible, and, 4) in respect to ways of elaborating sound psychological theories.

1) Identification of mental properties

Folkpsychological criteria of identification of the mental have two important characteristics: 1) they are fuzzy and prototypical, that is, they don't offer necessary nor sufficient conditions for the identification of something having a mental property, and, 2) mental properties are individuated, as we have noted, without any concern to internal facts. Let's analyze more the second characteristic.¹ A lot of work about how we attribute mental properties according to a semantical content suggests that, here, mental properties count as only attributed properties in the following sense. A property will be an only attributed property to a thing X —an OA property— iff the assertion that X has that property is completely justified by the knowledge of some peculiar facts of the context of X. If mental properties are OA properties, the only relevant facts in the world in order to make folkpsychological assertions about a subject X will also be facts that belong to the context of X. And the only source of justification for the attributions of these OA properties will be also the context. On the other hand, if the justification of the attribution of a property requires the knowledge of some internal facts, the property will be a not-only attributed one. So, a property will be a *not-only attributed property to a thing X* —an NOA property— iff the assertion that X has that property is justified only by the knowledge of some internal facts of X. The source of justification for the attribution of NOA properties to a thing is some kind of knowledge of its internal facts.

Let's suppose, for example, the property P. «Px» is true iff Px. So far, so good. Now, if the knowledge of some facts of the context of x is enough to justify the assertion Px, P will be an OA property. If, on the other hand, it is necessary to know some internal facts of x in order to justify the assertion Px, P will be a NOA property. «To be number one in a race», «to have a lot of homework», «to look happy» and so on, could be examples of OA properties. Properties like «to be green» or «to have a certain shape» are also OA properties that refer to the particular appearance, to the «skin», of the objects. We are justified in their attribution if we know a lot of facts about how we are looking at the objects, facts about our eyes, the light, the perspective and so on. And we don't need to know anything about the internal facts of those things with those OA properties. By contrast, «To be water», «to be a lion», «to be made of cheese», «to have five components», etc, are examples of NOA properties. In order to attribute these properties with enough justification, we need the knowledge of some internal facts of the things that have them. This is the point of view of the knowledge of the body with respect to mental properties. Its criteria of identification of the mental intend to offer, in the ideal case, necessary and sufficient conditions. They intend also to individuate

¹ Let's remember, for instance, the works of Burge, Davidson, dennett, Putnam and Stich about this topic.

mental properties according to internal facts of the bodies. Hence, mental properties must count as NOA properties with characteristic causal powers associated mainly via our nervous systems. These NOA properties could have, not only an intrinsic character, but also a relational one. If this is so, then there would have to exist some causal laws reflecting this relational character. Here, the distinction between relational and intrinsic —not relational— properties is, in a logical and metaphysical sense, irrelevant. It has only an heuristic and pragmatic interest. The important thing is the notion of NOA properties associated with genuine causal powers. These causal powers must be capable of being represented with certain, monadic or polyadic, predicates in a way that can support genuine and lawful causal connections. These causal connections are considered the only useful and definitive criteria of identification of the mental.

2) *Supervenience*

What about supervenience? Roughly, let's say that a set of properties *supervenes on* another set of properties if any distinction that can be put with regard to the having of the former properties entails some difference with regard to the having of the latter ones, the properties of the so called basis of the supervenience relation. If the properties of this basis are internal properties of a thing, we'll say that the supervenience is *local*. Now, if mental properties are OA properties, as they are from the folkpsychological viewpoint, it seems unlikely that they can locally supervene on the internal facts of the subjects. If, on the other hand, mental properties are NOA properties, their local supervenience on more basic properties of the subjects appears much more likely.

3) *Mental causation*

Mental causation must be covered by causal laws. This is the only —not metaphorical— sense in which we can understand mental causation as a part of the order of the world. But, how could an OA property be the antecedent or consequent part of the description of a genuine causal law? Local supervenience and mental causation seem to need NOA properties. Folkpsychology poses a very hard problem here. Really, we don't know how to identify mental properties without the folk criteria of identification. If we leave the knowledge of the body alone, we don't have any psychological knowledge at all. But, mental properties only are capable of local supervenience and they only can have causal efficiency through the internal facts of the subject that has them. It cannot be otherwise unless to have mental properties is a mere truism or a shorter way of speaking of another thing, of another thing that belongs to the context.

4) *Psychological theories*

Finally, in order to elaborate psychological theories, the adoption of the folkpsychological perspective seems to entail our looking for them inside sociolinguistic theories of attribution or something like that. It is supposed that the psychological properties described by these theories can't locally supervene on internal properties of the psychological subjects. They supervene on other properties of the world. And, perhaps, mental causation could be constructed with these bricks. But, the important

point is that all this leads to a very odd project. To adopt this sort of perspective means to give up a lot of plausible intuitions about the supervenience of the mental, about mental causation and about what must be relevant for a scientific psychological theory in which the body of the psychological subject plays a central role.

At a first look and through these four areas, the opposition between the point of view of folkpsychology and the point of view of the knowledge of the body is clear. Of course, you can say that this is not at all true. As far as folkpsychology accepts some general constrictions about what sort of bodies can have mental life, it is not so indifferent to internal facts of the body. Nowadays, this might be the case for our folkpsychology. If the old folkpsychology was linked to magic and religion in respect to the internal facts of our bodies, our folkpsychology is linked to science in a lot of folk ways. But, folkpsychology can work very well without these commitments. Moreover, it must do it in most of its working situations. This is an important point that we must not forget. We want to establish some links between the point of view of folkpsychology and the point of view of the knowledge of the body. But, the links set up by means of constrictions on the folk attributions are only contingent and accidental. They exist, but they are an irrelevant part of the folk. The scientifically important links between folkpsychology and the knowledge of the body must be found in another place.

2. Fodor: methodological individualism and the narrow/broad divide

Which is Fodor's view about these problems?. According to Fodor,² *individualism* is a general methodological position in science. Having a property is something individuated with respect to its causal powers. Only properties individuated this way count as scientifically relevant properties. Most of scientific taxonomies respect individualism. Psychology is individualistic too. Psychological states must be individuated with respect to their causal powers. Identity of psychological states must entail identity of causal consequences across contexts. Individualism doesn't prohibit the fact that some properties can be relational. But, if they are, then there must be some causal laws reflecting this.

Twin's stories —and related cases— try to show that some psychological properties are relative to the context and that they can't locally supervene on the actual body of the subject. Fodor considers this unproblematic. Twin's stories only show that the semantical evaluation is relative to a context. This relativity doesn't support lawful generalizations across contexts. Therefore, semantical evaluation of mental states is relative to each context, but it has no psychological relevance for elaborating respectable psychological theories.

Semantical properties are like the property of being an *H-(T-)particle*. Let's say, with Fodor, that whatever particle in the universe is an H-(T-)particle at time *t* iff at *t* my dime is heads-up. And that whatever particle in the universe is at time *t* a T-

² Mainly, FODOR (1980 and 1987).

particle iff at t my dime is tails-up. Whether something is an H or an T particle is completely irrelevant to its causal powers. Similarly for the property of being a mental state of a person who lives in a world where there is XYZ rather than H_2O in the Twin cases.

Local supervenience of the mental on the nervous system of the subject must be preserved. So if we don't have *mechanisms* that link our semantical evaluations of the mental with the causal powers of the nervous systems of the subjects, semantical evaluations cannot count as relevant indicators of psychological properties.

Methodological individualism, local supervenience of mental properties on neural properties —perhaps functional ones— and the lack of such a mechanism lead to *methodological solipsism*: the doctrine that psychological properties must be individuated without respect to their semantical evaluation.

Psychological states so individuated have *narrow contents*. Narrow contents are complex functions from thoughts and contexts to semantical properties. These kinds of functions are instantiated in our nervous systems. The particular values of these functions in each context constitute the *broad contents* of our folkpsychological speech in relation to that context. How could we pick out narrow contents? Well, Fodor's answer involves procedures of mention and counterfactual use of our broad contents, but narrow contents are strictly unexpressable. Their direct expression would require not only a mention but also a use of our broad contents, and broad contents aren't the contents a scientific psychology demands.

I have always had serious doubts about this notion of narrow content. One of my main problems might be put roughly as follows. Narrow contents are, we have said, complex functions between thoughts, contexts and semantical values. In some way, these functions are instantiated in our bodies. The *only guide* we have with which to posit and differentiate narrow contents is this: in whatever context, narrow contents related with a thought must yield the semantical values we would ascribe to that thought in that context. But, this is not very much. *A lot of different functional and causal networks instantiated in our nervous systems could do the work.* We have at hand a lot of these plausible functional and causal networks for each thought instantiated in our body. If we think about other sorts of bodies, the problem becomes much more perplexing: too many networks and too many kinds of networks. They may differ only in very small details, but how to discriminate the importance or not of these details? How to select the adequate, functional³ and causal, networks? *How to cut* into the adequate portions the functional and causal cake (in portions that we can scientifically eat)? The problem is that if you come back to your «only guide», and you claim that all these networks and kinds of networks constitute an unique narrow content, then *to be this specific narrow content instead of some other becomes a property only identified by means of the identification of OA properties.* But, we must, I am sure, make the body matter more.

³ Here, you can remember the arguments Putnam (1988) uses about the logical proliferation of functional explanations. Unless we adopt a perspective similar to the one I will sketch, folk-identified mental properties will be properties so open with respect to their functional specification as functional properties are with respect to their physical and causal implementation.

3) Change of perspective: canonical contexts of attribution and only-attributed but locally supervenient and causally efficacious properties

Now, I want to explore a possible way out of this problem. *What we have always desired to have* is the local supervenience of the mental properties identified according to our folk criteria and to develop causal theories about these mental properties. This is, I believe, a warranted wish.

All the so-called *secondary properties* of things (colours, sounds, etc.) share with our folk-identified mental properties the following characteristics: 1) they are OA properties in the sense defined, 2) their supervenience is generally supposed non local, and, 3) they don't belong to our deep microphysical theories of the world. But, this is not all the story. Although the first characteristic remains unchanged, we have *controlled situations* in which secondary properties are locally supervenient and belong to our, not-so-deep, theories of the world. Very often we consider colours as locally supervenient properties and, in this way, we use colour terms in our biological and chemical theories. Whether colours are or not metaphysically dispensable, in a deep scientific image of the world, is a very interesting philosophical problem. But, the fact is they are not dispensable in the ordinary scientific practice. This seems crucial to psychological theory. A psychological theory about the mental is not a philosophical one.

According to Fodor, we must distinguish strictly between narrow and broad mental contents and to base/construe scientific theories only on/about the first ones. But it is *like saying* physical objects must have some colours, narrow colours, that in no way are the colours, the broad colours, we see and describe from our context and that those narrow colours are the topic of a scientific theory of colour. If we don't consider in any way the colours with which we see the objects, objects couldn't have any colour at all. They could have physical, chemical properties and so forth, but not colours. *To speak about mental contents is like speaking about colours*. There must be some *canonical context of attribution*, some appropriate circumstances, in which the broad can be locally supervenient and can have lawful causal efficiency. To find out these particular circumstances for the mental is not only a conceptual problem but also, and mainly, an empirical one. A problem of the same variety is the problem of finding out the circumstances in which some peculiar internal structures are responsible for the emission of the light waves we associate with determinate colours.

Now, let's call a property *intrinsic* if it is representable with a certain monadic predicate capable of supporting genuine and lawful causal connections. A property will be *relational* if it is representable by a non monadic predicate capable of being incorporated in genuine and lawful causal connections. It is clear that properties can exist that are neither intrinsic nor relational. Some OA properties are of this kind, for instance, Fodor's property of being an H-(T-)particle. Often it is supposed that 1) OA properties can only be, if they are something, relational properties with a non-local supervenience, and that 2) only NOA properties can be intrinsic and locally supervenient. But, I consider both suppositions erroneous. First, as we have already mentioned, usually the distinction between intrinsic and relational properties depends, only, on

heuristic and pragmatic decisions. That distinction is relative to our interests and very often it doesn't entail any relevant logical or metaphysical difference. Second and more important, the way in which we have characterized our concepts, there isn't any reason why an OA property cannot be, in some cases, intrinsic and locally supervenient. Colours are a paradigmatic example of properties of this kind.

The statement that something has a determinate colour is completely justified by the knowledge of some facts of its context. But, in some special conditions of the context of attribution, the colours of an object are really intrinsic and locally supervenient properties, part and parcel of the object's microphysical structure and composition. In normal conditions of vision, colours are intrinsic and locally supervenient but also OA properties. If the conditions of vision are less than normal, if we have on our «sunglasses», for instance, colours are no longer either intrinsic or locally supervenient properties. To determine, precisely, normal conditions of vision is, as we have said, a difficult empirical problem; and the hypothesis that normal conditions exist involves numerous commitments. There is nothing trivial about them, and the same questions must be confronted in relation to mental contents.

If we have our «sunglasses» on, we lose the intrinsic and locally supervenient character of our colours, of the colours seen. But, this loss does not alter the intrinsic and locally supervenient character of OA properties. It only entails the relativity of this character to some fixed canonical context of attribution. In all empirical sciences the notion of normal conditions, those defining a canonical context of attribution, has a very clear function. And why not in psychology as well? Why must mental contents, broad mental contents, be more like H-(T-) particles than like colours?. To be in normal conditions is an extremely complex predicate and one that surely doesn't refer merely to OA properties, but it does, indeed, imply the intrinsic and locally supervenient character of some OA properties.

4. Only one kind of content

Fodor⁴ says:

«Your thought is content-identical to mine only if in every context in which you thought has truth condition T, mine has truth condition T and vice versa»

This is, contents instantiate the same functions from contexts to truth conditions. These are the mental contents relevant to our scientific theories of the mental. They are the narrow contents. On the other hand:⁵

«The 'broad' content of a thought is what you can semantically evaluate; it's what you get when you specify a narrow content and fix a context»

In the perspective I am sketching, there are not two sorts of mental contents. As we have seen, if there are two —broad and narrow contents as they are defined by Fodor—, and we try to specify the peculiar way narrow contents are instantiated in our body, then there would be *too many functional and causal candidates*. And the class to

⁴ FODOR (1987: Chap. 2).

⁵ Also FODOR (1987: Cap. 2).

which they all belong can only be characterized by means of OA properties; that is by means of contextualized semantical properties like having —the thoughts in question— such and such truth conditions in such and such contexts. Really, the body must matter more. There must, thus, be only one sort of mental content. One sort of mental content with a condition of identity similar to this:

Your thought is content-identical to mine if 1) in every context in which your thought has truth condition T, mine has truth condition T and vice versa, and 2) your internal structure and composition when you have your thought is sufficiently similar to mine when I have my thought in a canonical context of (self-)attribution

Let's explain. Subcondition 2 would reduce the proliferation of structural and compositional internal facts capable of fulfilling subcondition 1. The identity of contents is defined over the folkpsychological contents even though, in principle, they were ignorant of internal facts of the subjects. They are OA properties. If it is possible, a psychological theory related with the knowledge of the body must look for the local supervenience of these properties and for their causal relationships. To do this, the idea of canonical contexts of attribution is rich and suggestive. It is the standard, most travelled road in all of science. Science by nature covers OA properties with NOA ones through the fixing of canonical contexts of attribution. I am afraid that if we don't try something similar, we will find ourselves relegated to the field of *peripheral cognitive sciences*: that is, sociolinguistics, artificial intelligence, neurophysiology, reflexive folkpsychology and so on, far from a scientific cognitive psychology. But, I am also convinced that, in fact, something like this actually occurs in the everyday efforts of most psychologists.

In Fodor's view, narrow contents are complex functions from thoughts and contexts to the semantical properties, truth conditions, for instance, that would constitute the broad contents of these thoughts in these contexts. Those functions are instantiated in our bodies, mainly in our nervous systems. What makes a thought have the semantical values it has —according to folk attributions in whatever context—, is something instantiated in the body. But, if folkpsychology is as ignorant of internal facts of the bodies as we have claimed, no NOA property of the body can do this work. Your *classical Twins* and you share the same narrow contents since your thoughts in the same contexts *must* be semantically evaluated in the same way. But, this is not really a very difficult case: the same contexts plus the same internal facts *must originate* the same worlds. And broad contents, I am sure, supervene on the world. Now, *imagine another case of Twins*. You have a Twin who in no way shares with you any internal fact —structural neither compositional— but whose thoughts have, in every possible context, the same semantical values, the same truth conditions for instance, that your thoughts have. How could this be possible?. Well, your Twin is a very superficial Twin: he/she merely behaves like you, he/she merely reacts like you and so on. According to Fodor, your thoughts and the superficial Twin's thoughts share the same narrow mental contents because the thoughts of both have the same semantical evaluations in the same contexts. But, by hypothesis, you do not share any internal fact with your superficial Twin!. The only kind of properties that you share with him/her are OA properties. Hence, narrow mental contents are OA properties too. Of

course, extensionally, a narrow content is an equivalence class of internal facts. The class of all relevant internal facts of the subjects whose thoughts have in the same contexts the same semantical properties. But, again, belonging to this class of internal facts -functional and causal internal facts- is also an OA property.

Fodor's strategy doesn't help to select interesting NOA properties that can be associated with the folk mental life; that is, with the OA properties that constitute the folk contents. Classical Twins or superficial Twins don't help either. The former are exactly like ourselves in all internal facts. And the latter are completely different. The right solution must be found between them, in some notion of similarity between us, or our classical Twins, and whatever possible superficial Twin. In other words, we don't know what Fodor's ineffable narrow contents are. We only have the broad contents of our folkpsychological attributions, the various —real or counterfactuals— contexts in which we —really or counterfactually— attribute them and some knowledge of the internal facts of the psychological subjects to which we attribute these contents. These constitute the pieces of the puzzle. And the main options —in order to select in the subjects NOA properties related to these contents— are:

- 1) To consider that there will be no definite NOA properties of this kind unless —perhaps future— self-restrictions of the folk attributions of mental properties reduce this indefiniteness
- 2) To choose a privileged class of contexts of attribution —the sort of contexts we have called «canonical»—, to describe the relevant internal facts that covary with our attributions of mental contents and to construe, by means of similarity relationships, a class of internal facts on which the attributed mental contents can be locally supervenient on the body and can have the causal efficacy we want for mental properties as mental properties embodied in a subject.

The first is not really an option. Folkpsychology is as predictive, successful and universal as it is because of the autonomy of its attributions: the supposed self-restrictions are either an irrelevant part of folkpsychology, as we have said already, or, if relevant, they only spell suicide. But, the second option needs much more refinement.

5. Some refinements

We need to make clear a lot of points. First of all, what are, more precisely, those canonical contexts of attributions and how might they be discovered?. Intuitively, canonical contexts of attribution for mental properties, like whatever canonical context, are contexts in which all goes well. We cannot discover in them anything that converts our attributions into errors. The mental properties attributed by folkpsychology are OA properties, but the attributions may be fallible. There are sound, correct attributions and unsound, incorrect attributions. Let's suppose, as I assumed earlier, that colours are OA properties too. This doesn't mean that the colours we see and describe when we have our «sunglasses» on and when we know this fact —fact that belongs to the context-- are colours we are disposed to attribute to the objects. In relation to mental properties we are in a very similar situation.

To be an H-(T-)particle is an OA property too. But, it is a property that doesn't have any causal relevance. We don't have any causal law in which these properties appear. On the other hand, to be of a certain colour or to have certain mental content are properties causally relevant in certain conditions: in those conditions that convert a determinate context of attribution of these properties into a canonical one. In these conditions, we can know what internal facts are happening —inside the skin— and we can try relevant covariations between these internal facts and our attributions, retaining the canonical character of the contexts in which we make the attributions. We don't need any other metaphysical background about meaning, causality and the order of the world. We need only to apply to mental life the *same epistemological strategy* that we apply in natural science to properties like colours, sounds, macroscopic objects and so on when we think they are interesting properties from the scientific point of view.

Once again, in some cases colours are locally supervenient on classes of internal facts of the things. Supervenience epistemologized is no more than an affair of lawless covariation. The only metaphysics we need is inside the limits of science, its epistemology and its methodology. So, colours, as colours, could have some sort of causal efficacy because of some sort of internal facts. Of course, a lot of attributions of colours are out of play: for instance, all the attributions we can make when we have on our «sunglasses» —and, it can be sunglasses of a very wide physical and philosophical variety—. Moreover, there are not two kinds of colours, narrow and broad colours. There is only one kind. Some special members of this kind are locally supervenient and have a causal efficacy according to our science.

In reference to folk contents, we could say exactly the same. Not all folk contents but only some special ones must be locally supervenient on the body. Perhaps not in the precise format of «beliefs-that» and «desires-that» but in the format of «beliefs-about» and «desires-about».⁶ These contents must be easily transportable with the bodies to other accesible and near-possible worlds. To other worlds in which we could be equipped with an epistemic and linguistic apparatus very close to the one we have in our actual world. Folkpsychology is very ignorant of the internal facts of the psychological subjects, but it is equally ignorant of any internal facts of things within the context. So, the following counterfactual thesis must be true:

IF 1) there would exist a world with internal facts of the same type as those in our world —in relation to a canonical context of attribution of a certain mental content— that are the basis of a supervenient relation of this content,
AND 2) in that world we were equipped with our same epistemic and linguistic powers,
THEN 3) in such a world the subjects that have these internal facts will have that mental content too.

In these conditions, we could have very different worlds but the same mental contents, the same folk, broad contents. So, these contents could have a local supervenience

⁶ Or in the format of «core beliefs-about» and «core desires-about». I don't think the core-strategy is a dead way for some —let's say «simple minded»— psychological subjects like non-human organisms, children, vetry handicaped people or AI engines.

and a causal efficiency. Of course, this would be applicable only to some folk contents. The other cases of folk contents, contents to which all of this is inapplicable, must belong more to the field of sociolinguistic theory and practice than to the field of scientific psychology dealing with facts happening inside our body.

A final and rather puzzling remark. Perhaps the sentence «the snow is white» doesn't need to be true in every possible world in which the sentence «X believes that the snow is white» can adequately *describe and refer* to a true belief of X in that world. Perhaps the sentence «the snow is white» and the internal facts we could associate, from a canonical context of attribution and for subjects like you and me, with «to believe that the snow is white» —the token of the mental sentence we have when we believe that the snow is white, if you prefer— don't belong to the same semantical type. Perhaps, they don't have the same truth conditions. Why suppose they do? *In order to refer and describe a thing with semantical properties, we don't need to do it with an expression that has the same semantical properties.* We can, but we are not forced to do so. And, I think that in relation to the *basic and pre-folkpsychological semanticity of the mental*, the things are so complicated to suspect that here this may be not the case it is best, as a strategy. When we identify mental contents —folk, broad contents— and we try to establish their local supervenience and their causal powers through a supposed canonical context of attribution, we are in the same situation as we are when we interpret a text, a text in which the symbols —the tokens of these symbols— are causally connected among themselves and with some pieces of the world. This is, for instance, the situation we are in when we are interpreting an E-mail in our computer. We describe the message with expressions like «it says that ...», «if now it says that ..., I am sure that in the next page it will say that —», and so on. Let's say that this is the folkreading of the message. It is possible to identify unambiguously an expression of the computer with the description «it says that ...» even though that expression —the computer expression— doesn't have the same semantical properties that the expression «...» can have. Also, it is possible to look for the local supervenience in my computer of content «...» in spite of the fact that «to say that ...» is an OA property to my computer. Also, we can try to describe the causal relationships associated in my computer with content «...» as such a content. Furthermore, all of this could be made with mental contents and could serve as grounds for a scientific psychology in which folk contents are related with our knowledge of the body. But a problem remains. The expressions in my body —or in my computer— can have other basic and pre-folk semantical properties that the ones «...» in «I believe that ...» —or in «it says that ...»— can have. The problem is more complicated, because there is *nothing in my body* that is the trade-mark of a basic and original semanticity⁷. My mental word «cat» could be causally linked to cats in an

⁷ I remember Dennett exploring recently this problem in a lecture given at the «II Seminario interuniversitario de ciencia cognitiva» (Salamanca, March-1990. The title of his lecture was «The Interpretation of Texts, People and other Artifacts»). Even if we are realists about mental properties, as Dennett seems to be now, we will have the very hard problem of finding out the natural --non artificial--, original and pre-folkpsychological mechanisms that are the source on any mental property. But, perhaps, the divide between the natural and the

artificial way. In the same *artificial* way, the word «cat» in my computer can be causally linked to cats, but with, as well, the same *natural appearance* with which our mental word «cat» is causally linked to cats according to Fodor⁸. What is the difference between natural causal chains — natural causal chains that originate the desired basic semanticity — and the artificial ones?. Perhaps, this difference is only relative to our conceptual schemes. Moreover, this difference cannot entail any difference in our bodies or in their near contexts. Of course, we can look for some basic, original and pre-folkpsychological semanticity although it depends on our conceptual schemes as a lot of very important things do! But, in this case, it must be clear that *we will not be looking for another kind of content but for the source of whatever content*⁹. From the point of view of psychological models guided by Fodor's representational theory of mind, all of this is ignored. But, I think that it could be an important starting point in order to coordinate such models with other new models, with connectionist models for instance. *Perhaps scientific psychology needs to have more than one sort of models and the models for folk describable cognitive processes don't need to be the models for the acquisition of basic and pre-folkpsychological semanticity*. This is a very important distinction, because it is quite possible to have theories about the former without any clear idea about how to describe and explain completely the latter, even with the help of new connectionist models.

References

- FIELD H. (1978). «Mental Representation», *Erkenntnis*, 13.
 FODOR J. (1980). «Methodological Solipsism Considered as a Research Strategy in Cognitive Science», *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 3.
 (1987). *Psychosemantics*, Cambridge, MIT Press.
 (1990). *A Theory of Content and Other Essays*, Cambridge, MIT Press.
 PUTNAM H. (1988). *Representation and Reality*, Cambridge, MIT Press.

artificial depends too much of the various, scientific and folk, humans conceptual schemes and points of view. «Cat» can be caused by cats also in a lot of artificial ways. And the ways dogs could cause in some circumstances «cat», for instance, also could be asymmetrically dependent on these artificial causal paths! --see FODOR (1990: Chap. 2 and 3)--. Now, our problem is not only the problem of distinguishing situations of type I from situations of type II, but also the problem if distinguishing the natural from the artificial. And, how to do it?

⁸ For instance, FODOR (1990: Chap. 3 and 4).

⁹ It is obvious that, for subjects like you and me, the «natural» learning of the public word «cat», for instance, must be an important part of the source of internal facts -mental tokens- that have the semantical content we describe by the word «cat». See last remarks of FIELD (1978). But, we must not be confused. One thing is the source of a mental content and other thing is the way we describe and identify this content. The basic semanticity that a source provides can be different from the semantical properties by means of which we are able to identify mental causal efficacy, inside of psychological theories sensible to internal facts of the body.